DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 465 970 CS 511 144

TITLE	National Writing Project Annual Report, 2001.
INSTITUTION	National Writing Project, Berkeley, CA.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2002-03-00
NOTE	29p.; Some photographs may not reproduce adequately.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Writing Project, University of California, 2105 Bancroft, #1042, Berkeley, CA 94720-1042. Tel: 510-642-0963; Fax: 510-642-4545; e-mail: nwp@writingproject.org; Web site: http://writingproject.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Annual Reports; *Educational Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; Teacher Role; *Writing Improvement; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	*National Writing Project; Teachers Teaching Teachers

ABSTRACT

The National Writing Project's (NWP's) mission is to improve writing and learning in the nation's schools. Through its professional development model, the NWP recognizes the primary importance of teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership. In 2001, the project sponsored over 5,500 professional development programs through its local sites. In 2001, NWP sites asked 12,480 expert teachers to work with their teaching colleagues as well as with administrators, parents, community members, and students. With this 2001 Annual Report, the NWP celebrates 10 years of federal funding. The report is divided into the following sections: The National Writing Project Is Putting Writing on the Map; Investing in Teacher Leadership; Promoting University-School Collaboration; Creating Professional Communities; Map of NWP Sites; Building Capacity 2000-2001; Developing School Partnerships; Providing Resources for Teachers; Marking Our Progress; Communicating across the Network; Financial Data; and Board of Directors, Senior Staff. (NKA)

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ED 465 970

National Writing Project Annual Report 2001

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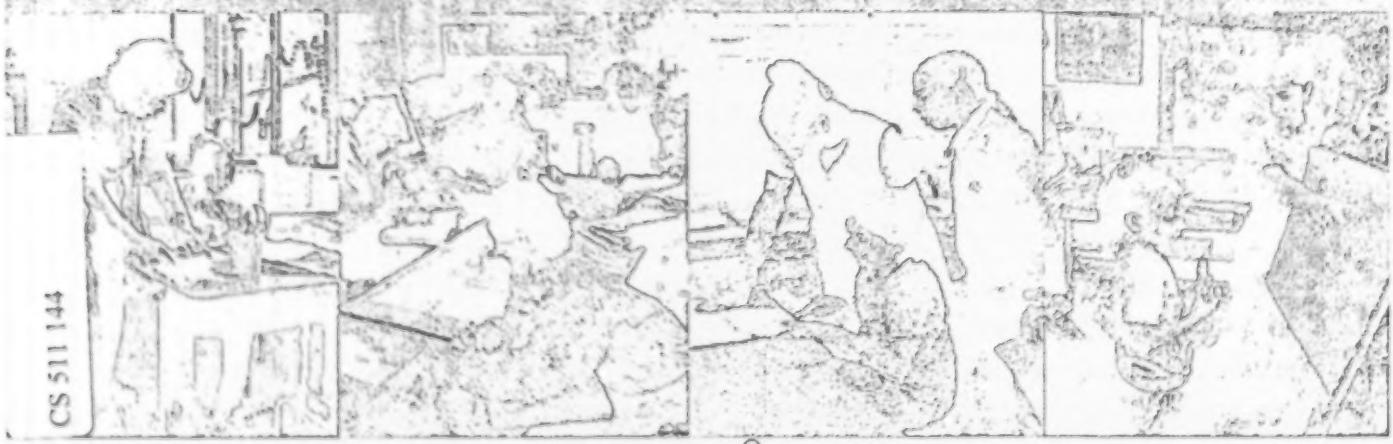


CS 511 144

Mission Statement

The mission of the National Writing Project is to improve writing and learning in the nation's schools. Through its professional development model, the National Writing Project recognizes the primary importance of teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership.

The National Writing Project believes that access to high-quality educational experiences is a basic right of all learners and a cornerstone of equity. Through its extensive network of teachers, the National Writing Project seeks to promote exemplary instruction of writing in every classroom in America.

The National Writing Project values diversity—our own as well as that of our students, their families, and their communities. We recognize that our lives and practices are enriched when those with whom we interact represent diversities of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and language.

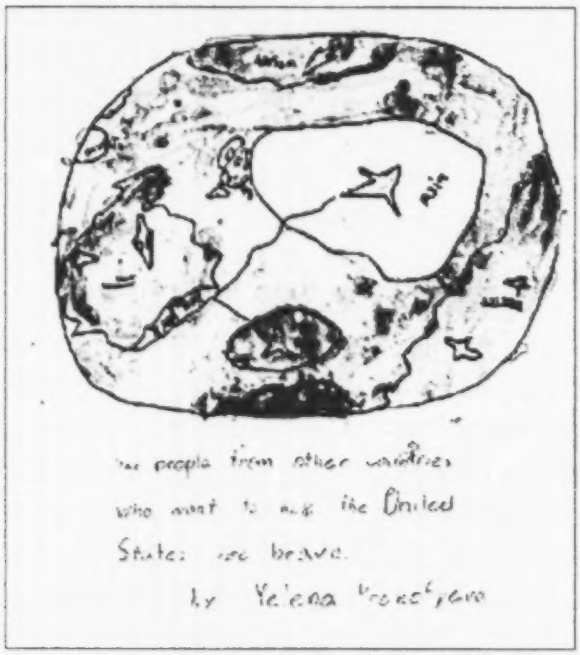
The goals of the National Writing Project are:

- to improve student writing and learning in kindergarten through university classrooms
- to extend the uses of writing in all disciplines
- to provide schools, colleges, and universities with an effective professional development model
- to identify, celebrate, and enhance the professional role of successful classroom teachers.

Photos: Elizabeth Crews
Printed March 2002
Berkeley, California

We are building a nation of students . . .

. . . who can write.



people from other countries
who want to visit the United
States are brave.
by Ye'lena

The people who volunteer to
donate blood to the
people who get hurt are
brave. Monica Briceula

From *Some People Are Brave*, a classroom book written by second grade students of Area 3 Writing Project teacher Dawn Imamoto, Sacramento, California (September 18, 2001).

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Dear Friends of the National Writing Project

Daniel Boggan Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Richard Sterling
Executive Director

With this 2001 Annual Report, the National Writing Project celebrates ten years of federal funding. In the last five years, we have seen that funding increase from $2.9 million to $10 million. With these increases have come new requirements and requests from the U.S. Department of Education. The additional funds have enabled us to increase funding to local writing project sites, add new sites to the network, and support evaluation of our work, especially the impact on student achievement. In this year's report, you will see a summary of one such study.

The task before us remains clear: to improve the teaching of writing and improve learning in our nation's schools. Writing continues to be a gate-keeping skill for success in school and beyond. Yet, writing is often the forgotten third "R" for policymakers and educators. To extend and deepen the work of the project, we must continue to bring the importance of writing to their attention. Our stance toward the teaching of writing remains rooted in highly effective teachers of writing; we believe that we can persuade more educators to see writing's central importance to the educational goals of students.

The year 2001 also marked a significant change in the normal life of this nation, and with that change the role of teachers and their work has come to a new prominence. In this annual report, we have highlighted a book, *Some People Are Brave*, written by second grade students in response to the attack on the United States on September 11. The book, from the classroom of Dawn Imamoto, a teacher-consultant from the Area 3 Writing Project in Sacramento, California, is an illustration of the power of writing both for the children who wrote these pages and the people who read them. It is one example of how writing project teachers all over the country have participated in activities designed to help allay the fears of young children and make sense of the events with older children.

Teachers will always play a significant part in building—and rebuilding—the strength of our nation. Writing project teachers are among the strongest teachers in the nation, and they have been enabling students to become more aware, more knowledgeable, and more compassionate through writing. As a national network, we are bound together by our commitment to that work and to each other.

The National Writing Project Is Putting Writing on the Map

Writing is pivotal to learning and to success in and beyond school. Children, and adults, use writing to understand, recall, and create ideas in subjects such as math and science, or in business or everyday problem solving. For many young students, writing is also an important pathway to learning to read. Because writing is a curriculum centerpiece – spanning all grade levels and disciplines – it needs constant attention.

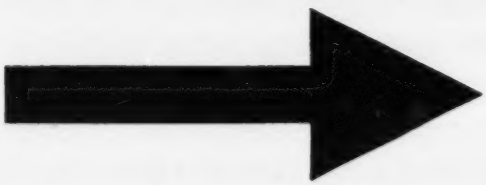
The National Writing Project is the only national program in America working to improve writing and learning. With the start of federal support in 1991, the NWP began to put writing on the map.

By developing new writing project sites, new project brings exemplary writing practices to more teachers in the nation.

In 2001, the project sponsored over 5,500 professional development programs through its local sites. In addition, local sites build and sustain long-term professional communities where teachers renew their skills and their desire to stay in education.

Putting writing on the map is no small feat. In the next decade, over two million teachers will enter the profession. The goal of the National Writing Project is to provide programs and communities for every one of them.

Key Strategies



Investing in Teacher Leadership

To build a nation of students with the skills and confidence to write, the National Writing Project builds the skills and knowledge of teachers. The process begins at 175 university locations around the country where writing project sites invite the 20 to 25 most experienced local teachers to an intensive summer institute. During the five week time span, teacher-participants present their best classroom practices, study and discuss research, and develop their own writing skills. When the school year resumes, these teachers become the teachers of their colleagues. They provide what teachers need most: practical teaching advice, theories of learning, mutual professionalism, and a focus on student achievement.

Teachers teaching teachers—the NWP model of professional development—offers the depth of knowledge teachers need to actually teach writing, rather than merely assign it. The teachers-teaching-teachers model also ensures breadth. In 2001, National Writing Project sites asked 12,480 expert teachers to work with their teaching colleagues as well as with administrators, parents, community members, and students. The result was 2.6 million contact hours for participants in NWP programs.

The teachers-teaching-teachers model is flexible. It works in a school partnership setting and equally well in a district where a series of workshops may be the best vehicle for reaching into classrooms. Last year, NWP local sites conducted 449 school partnerships and 3,011 inservice series in schools and districts.

Today is Thursday.
Yesterday was Alex's
mom's birthday.

Promoting University-School Collaboration

When the National Writing Project was founded in 1974, universities and schools agreed on the importance of collaborating. For student writing to improve dramatically, teachers across grade levels, disciplines, and institutions needed to work together.

Over the years, the benefits of collaboration have been apparent in the steady stream of educators who attend writing project programs—more than 100,000 last year. Perhaps more telling are the stories of teachers who attend a summer institute on their local university campus and then return to their classrooms, their enthusiasm for teaching restored. Some of their stories, like these below, highlight the shifts teachers make—not only in teaching techniques—but in the very purposes of their teaching:

> I can't tell you how that experience [the summer institute] changed me. It's not so much that the philosophy was radical or revolutionary. In fact, it was kind of like a recognition that the way I thought about teaching was all right.... Because I wasn't bombarding my kids with worksheets, I think some of the other teachers thought I wasn't working hard. But I was trying to get at their thinking, to remind them that they COULD think, that thinking was allowed in school. I came back here in the fall and totally restructured my class around writing (and later literature) and I had the research to back it up.
>
> Teacher Ann Lewis, quoted in *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African-American Children*, by Gloria Ladson-Billings, Jossey-Bass, 1994.

> All of a sudden, people were talking about learning. Instead of becoming burned out, we were becoming more creative. What happened was more than just intellectual renewal. The whole spirit of the school changed. It became a joyful place where the adults are excited about learning, and that excitement spread to the students.
>
> Teacher Linda Starkweather, discussing what happened at her school after she participated in a writing project summer institute and shared what she learned with colleagues, quoted in What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, Report of the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, September, 1996.

Creating Professional Communities

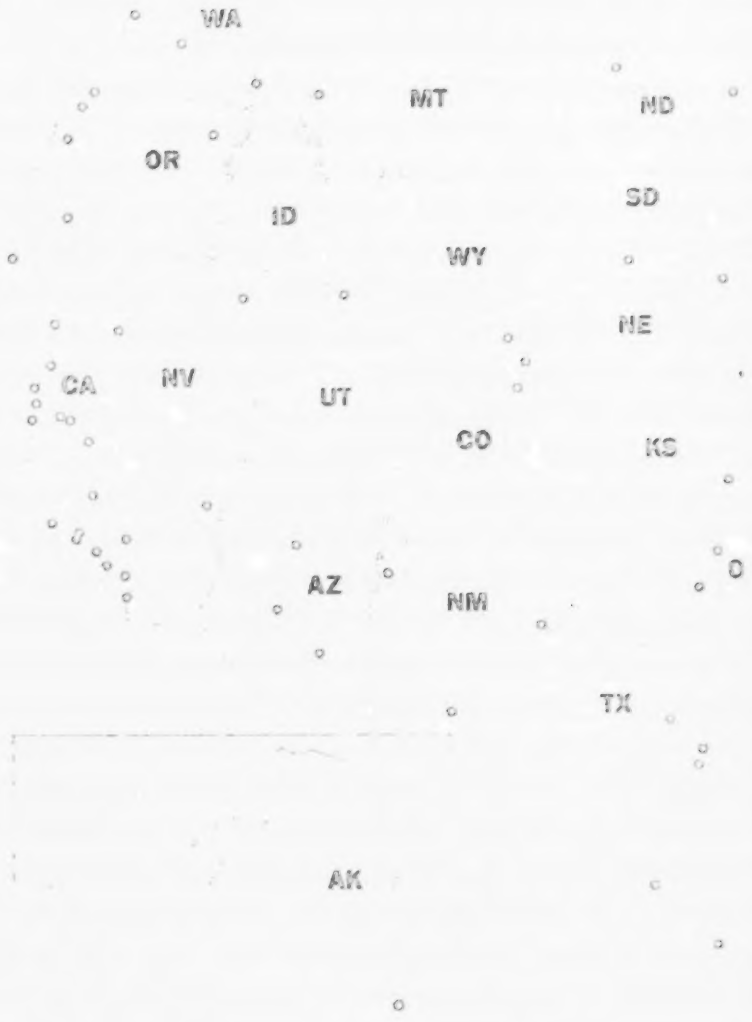
Where are teachers most likely to learn about the latest research or about how to motivate a reluctant student writer? What happens on a day in September when writing is more important than ever for helping children make sense of the world? Where can a teacher turn immediately for support?

National Writing Project local sites create professional communities for teachers so they can come together – in person or online – to keep their learning alive and to be resources for each other. Within these local communities, teachers conduct classroom research, join study groups, develop curriculum, and discuss issues such as teaching students who are new to this country.

The National Writing Project also provides communities or networks for joining together teachers and site leaders from all parts of the country. These networks share a common purpose – improving the work of the NWP:

- Project Outreach Network (PON) is a group of sites focused on providing high quality professional development to teachers working in poverty areas. PON increased to 26 sites by adding 8 new sites in 2000.
- Urban Sites Network was established in 1988. This network hosts an annual conference, last year in Las Vegas, Nevada, where teachers throughout the nation share their knowledge of exemplary writing instruction in urban schools.
- Rural Sites Network was established in 1990 for site directors, classroom teachers, and school administrators from rural areas. This network sponsored its 2001 conference in Perdido Beach, Alabama, where participants taught each other about strategies ranging from school and community newspapers to uses of technology.
- English Language Learners Network is a group of sites sharing strategies to improve writing among students learning English in our nation's schools. In 2001, this network sponsored a series of special focus workshops for key teacher-leaders across the country.
- Teacher Inquiry Communities Network, the newest of our national networks, collaborated with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Coalition of Essential Schools on a national teacher research conference.

National Writing



Alabama
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- Mobile
- Normal
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- Tuscaloosa

Alaska
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Arizona
- Flagstaff
- Tempe
- Tucson

Arkansas
- Conway
- Fayetteville
- Little Rock

California
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- Davis
- Fresno
- Irvine
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles (2)
- Merced
- Riverside
- San Diego
- San Jose
- San Marcos
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Cruz
- Turlock

Colorado
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- Greeley

Connecticut
- Fairfield
- Storrs

Delaware
- Newark

District of Columbia

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- Fort Lauderdale
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- Orlando
- Tampa

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- Statesboro
- Valdosta

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- Honolulu

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Illinois
- Chicago
- Evanston
- Normal

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- Muncie

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Project Sites 2001

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Montana
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Las Vegas
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New Hampshire
Plymouth

New Jersey
New Brunswick
Trenton

New Mexico
Gallup
Portales

New York
Buffalo
Long Island
New York City
New Paltz

North Carolina
Charlotte
Cullowhee
Raleigh
Winston-Salem

North Dakota
Grand Forks
Minot

Ohio
Kent
Mansfield
Oxford
Toledo

Oklahoma
Norman
Stillwater

Oregon
Ashland
Eugene
La Grande
Portland
Salem

Pennsylvania
Fogelsville
Indiana
Middletown
Philadelphia
Pittsburgh
West Chester

Puerto Rico
San Juan

Rhode Island
Providence

South Carolina
Charleston
Clemson
Columbia
Conway
Florence
Rock Hill
Spartanburg
Sumter

South Dakota
Rosebud
Vermillion

Tennessee
Martin

Texas
Austin
Brownsville
El Paso
Fort Worth
Houston
Laredo
San Marcos
Texarkana

Utah
Logan

Vermont
Burlington

Virgin Islands
St. Thomas

Virginia
Blacksburg
Charlottesville
Fairfax
Norfolk
Petersburg
Richmond
Williamsburg
Wise

Washington
Ellensburg
Seattle

West Virginia
Huntington
Morgantown
South Charleston

Wisconsin
Oshkosh
Milwaukee

Wyoming
Laramie

Building Capacity 2000-2001

The National Writing Project uses its federal funding to establish, support, and strengthen local sites so that ultimately, teachers in all regions of the country will have access to high-quality professional development.

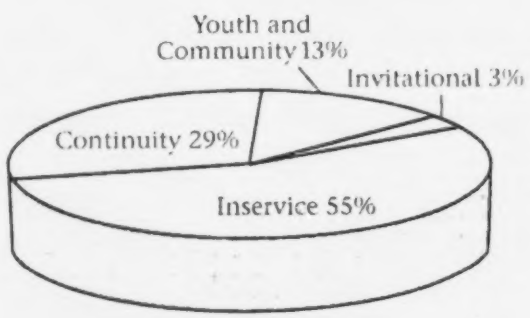
• Writing project sites	175
• States where sites are located (plus D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands)	50
• Programs offered by sites	5,516
• Educator participants	128,813
• Participants in all programs (includes teachers, administrators, students, and parents)	211,444
• Contact hours for program participants	2,678,561
• Teacher-leaders conducting programs at sites	12,480
• Local site cost sharing	$19.5 million
• Average funds leveraged from local sites for every $1 of federal funding	$5

Developing School Partnerships

More than half of NWP programs take place in schools. In 2000-2001, National Writing Project local sites conducted more than 3,000 inservice workshops for teachers. More than one-third of these inservice programs occurred as part of ongoing partnerships with schools. This shift toward working in partnership arrangements has enabled the project to provide more attention to teachers for longer periods of time. Teachers in NWP partnership schools experienced a variety of programs:

- Planning with school improvement teams
- Goal setting and planning for evaluation
- Summer institutes
- Inservice workshops
- Demonstration teaching in classrooms
- Curriculum development
- Study groups, seminars, teacher research opportunities
- On-site writing assessments
- Young writers programs
- Parent and community programs

Types of NWP Programs



Providing Resources for Teachers

The National Writing Project attends to what teachers need on a daily basis to give their students the best possible classroom experiences in writing. Typically, then, our programs focus on research-based practices, on examining student work, and on making informed curricular decisions. Other typical writing project programs emphasize standards and assessment.

But not every day of teaching and learning is a typical one. Immediately following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the National Writing Project offered teachers across America resources for supporting children and families, particularly through writing. Teachers responded generously, adding more resources and expressing their gratitude:

- I had my students complete a bulletin board project about their fears and ways to overcome them.

- My second-graders wrote a class book called Some People Are Brave in response to what happened on September 11.

- Our site is sponsoring an event on October 11, 2001, called Writing and Remembering: Aftermath—One Month Later.

- The New York City Writing Project listserv has been an incredible way for people to share website addresses, writings by people from varying perspectives, and recommended lessons and materials to use in the classroom.

- I was pleased to get the Web link to help us direct our instruction during this critical time in our nation's schools. I am a fourth grade writing teacher in eastern Kentucky.

- It is important to use writing to move through difficult times.

Marking Our Progress

A 2000-2001 Academy for Educational Development (AED) evaluation highlights the significant impact writing project programming has had in a sampling of third and fourth grade classrooms in California, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania. Twenty-nine writing project teachers and over 700 of their students participated in the study.

In response to timed writing assignments given in the fall and spring, 89% of third graders and 81% of fourth-graders involved in the study reached adequate or strong achievement for effective persuasive writing by their second assessment. Further, the percentage of fourth-graders reaching strong achievement more than doubled from baseline to follow-up. Most third-graders (83%) and fourth-graders (73%) also displayed general or clear control of the writing conventions of usage, mechanics, and spelling by their second assessment. English language learners (ELL) were more likely than non-ELL students to improve their scores in both effective persuasive writing and writing conventions.

In a survey of the participating teachers, most strongly agreed that writing project programming had caused them to change their views on teaching (86%), change teaching practices (72%), and seek further information or training (86%). By comparison, less than one-fourth of teachers nationwide who had participated in other types of intensive professional development (32 hours or longer) made such claims.[1] AED found that NWP teachers spent far greater time on writing instruction than most fourth grade teachers around the country and that most NWP teachers took on leadership roles in their schools, districts, or states.

Three-fourths of the schools involved in the AED study were classified as low socioeconomic status, with at least 50% of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

1 The nationwide sample of teachers includes 11,441 third and fourth grade classroom teachers who completed the U.S. Dept. of Education's National Center for Education Statistics School and Staffing Survey in 1993-94.

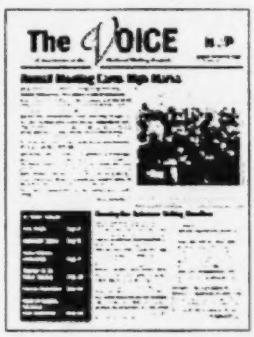
Communicating Across the Network . . .

Through a variety of publications, and through the NWP website at writingproject.org, the National Writing Project documents and disseminates the work accomplished by writing project teachers across the country.

NWP's professional journal, The Quarterly,

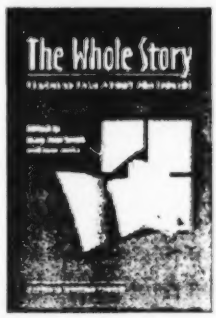
offers thought-provoking and inspiring articles on strategies for teaching writing. Contributors include the NWP network's most accomplished writing teachers, from kindergarten through university.

The NWP newsletter, The Voice, keeps writing project teachers up-to-date on national events and opportunities, and the latest developments at local sites across the network.



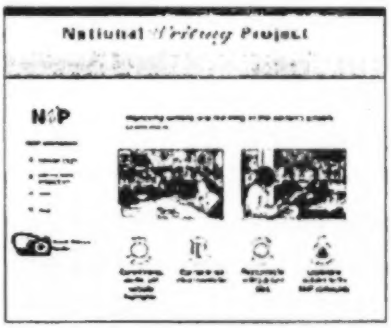
E-Voice is the writing project's new electronic newsletter, connecting site directors and teacher-leaders to online versions of *The Voice* and *The Quarterly*, and keeping them current on the latest NWP news.

The Whole Story, the newest addition to NWP's growing collection of books, is a compelling collection of eleven essays from writing project teachers about their experiences using writing portfolios in the classroom.



National Writing Project at Work, a new monograph series written by writing project teachers and site leaders, illustrates the creativity and autonomy of individual NWP sites and offers an important body of knowledge about innovative programs conducted in local writing project communities.

. . . In Print and Online



The NWP website, in addition to providing online resources to writing project sites and electronic versions of all of NWP's publications, hosts a growing online community, NWP Interactive, where teachers from all grade levels and every corner of the country can log in to learn from each other about the teaching of writing.

NWP Interactive is also home to Authors and Issues Online, a web-based "live" conference, hosted by NWP's special-focus networks, that joins teachers in conversation with authors of the latest and best resources on teaching writing to discuss cutting-edge issues in education.

NWP's interactive summer journal, known as E-Anthology, is an online forum open to teacher-participants in invitational summer institutes at 175 sites across the network. Facilitated by experienced writing project teacher-leaders, E-Anthology gives participants the opportunity to post writing for peer review, discuss classroom practice, and share strategies and resources with hundreds of teachers who are simultaneously experiencing the summer institute.

In 2001, the National Writing Project recorded its second audio production, *Rural Voices Radio II*. This two-CD set features readings from teachers and students in rural communities in Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, and Mississippi. Rural Voices Radio I, released in 2000, received a Special Merit Award from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters.

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
September 30, 2001

ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents		$ 1,048,183
Accounts receivable		2,175
Grant receivable		765,000
Prepaid expenses		35,131
Furniture and equipment, net		313,667
	Total assets	$ 2,164,156
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable		$ 799,741
Accrued expense		85,564
	Total liabilities	$ 885,305
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted		$ 1,243,851
Temporarily restricted		35,000
		$ 1,278,851
	Total liabilities and net assets	$ 2,164,156

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2001

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT			
Federal assistance	$ 9,000,000	$ –	$ 9,000,000
Contributions	68,924	53,381	122,305
Publications	43,384	–	43,384
Interest income	58,830	–	58,830
Net assets released from restrictions:			
Satisfaction of program restrictions	141,313	(141,313)	–
TOTAL REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT	$ 9,312,451	$ (87,932)	$ 9,224,519
EXPENSES:			
Program services			
Writing project developments	$ 8,333,803	$ –	$ 8,333,803
Supporting services			
Management and general	844,930	–	844,930
TOTAL EXPENSES	$ 9,178,733	–	$ 9,178,733
CHANGE IN ASSETS	$ 133,718	$ (87,932)	$ 45,786
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	$ 1,110,133	$ 122,932	$ 1,233,065
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	$ 1,243,851	$ 35,000	$ 1,278,851

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2001

	Program Services	Management and General	Total
Site support grants	$ 4,740,370	$ –	$ 4,740,370
Personnel	1,311,230	315,005	1,626,235
Professional services	1,322,576	23,368	1,345,944
Conferences	416,053	1,278	417,331
Travel	372,134	5,546	377,680
Facility costs	83	253,920	254,003
Publications	98,665	-	98,665
Supplies	8,136	63,171	71,307
Printing	49,498	12,871	62,369
Telephone	203	46,681	46,884
Miscellaneous	5,273	33,405	38,678
Postage	9,582	23,613	33,195
Accounting	–	12,500	12,500
Equipment maintenance	–	8,815	8,815
Insurance	–	6,403	6,403
	$ 8,333,803	$ 806,576	$ 9,140,379
Depreciation expense	–	38,354	38,354
	$ 8,333,803	$ 844,930	$ 9,178,733

Independent Auditor's Statement

I have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of the National Writing Project (a California not-for-profit organization) as of September 30, 2001, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. I believe that my audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.

In my opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the National Writing Project as of September 30, 2001, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, I have also issued a report dated January 25, 2002, on my consideration of the National Writing Project's internal control over financial reporting and my tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be read in conjunction with this report in considering the results of my audit.

The accompanying schedule of expenditures of federal awards is presented for the purposes of additional analysis as required by U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*, and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in my opinion, is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

James G. Woo, CPA
January 25, 2002

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Support for the National Writing Project is provided by the U.S. Department of Education, foundations, corporations, universities, and K-12 schools.

Independent Evaluator's Statement

In our studies of schools and districts, we have found that the health of the educational system depends very much upon the health of the teaching profession. And conversely, it is difficult to have a vibrant teaching profession when the system is ailing. NWP provides a much-needed source of ongoing nourishment for many of the nation's most knowledgeable and dedicated teachers. These teachers, in turn, provide professional development that supports thousands of their colleagues. By shoring up the teaching profession, and by giving thousands of teachers across the nation opportunities to improve the health of their local schools and districts, NWP is making a significant contribution to the overall health of the educational system in the United States.

Mark St. John, Ph.D.
Inverness Research Associates
March 2002

More student writing from *Some People Are Brave*, a classroom book written by second grade students of Area 3 Writing Project teacher Dawn Imamoto, Sacramento, California (September 18, 2001).

National Writing Project
University of California
2105 Bancroft Way #1042
Berkeley, CA 94720-1042
Phone: 510-642-0963
Fax: 510-642-4545
Email: nwp@writingproject.org
Web: www.writingproject.org

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